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East Europe

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Bulgaria: Videnov Departs for Russia on 'Formal' Visit

AU1403123996 Sofia BTA in English 1212 GMT 14 Mar 96

[Report by Ekaterina Kazasova; "Prime Minister Videnov Leaves on Two-Day Formal Visit to Russia"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sofia, March 14 (BTA) — Prime Minister Zhan Videnov today left on a two-day official visit to Moscow, heading a governmental delegation. He returns a visit by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to Sofia last May. The visit is another important step for the strengthening of relations with Bulgaria's traditional partners to the East, the prime minister said before his departure.

The sides are expected to sign seven intergovernmental and interdepartmental accords, continuing the development of a new legal framework of bilateral relations in the changed conditions. The agreements include a declaration on cooperation in labour, an accord on cooperation in forestry, a veterinary convention, an agreement on the supply of special-purpose goods from Russia, and an accord on cooperation in industrial property. Most importantly, the sides will sign an agreement making the existing intergovernmental agreements effective. This would complete the development of the new legal framework of bilateral relations, said Prime Minister Videnov.

Official meetings with President Boris Yeltsin, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and the Chair of the Russian Duma Gennadiy Seleznyev will focus on a wide scope of issues including the liberalization and intensification of business and commercial ties, the future of joint ventures and joint participation in international projects, particularly in communications, the situation in the Balkans, Europe and the world, said the Bulgarian Prime Minister. The future of the project for building an oil pipeline from the Bulgarian port of Burgas to Alexandroupolis in northern Greece will also be on the agenda. "We hope to get the support of the Russian side for holding a trilateral meeting of representatives of Bulgaria, Greece and Russia for the setting up of a joint venture to implement the project," Videnov also said.

The sides are expected to sign an agreement between Bulbank of Bulgaria and Vnesheconombank of Russia, the absence of which was the major stumbling block for implementing an agreement signed last year for settling the 100 million Russian Rubles debt to Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian delegation includes Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Cooperation Atanas Paparizov, of Finance Dimitur Kostov, of Labour and Social Affairs Mincho Koralski, of Culture Georgi Kostov and other heads of major Bulgarian establishments. Accompanying the delegation are experts, businessmen and cultural figures. Days of Bulgaria in Russia are scheduled to open this evening in Moscow to continue until the end of May.

Bulgaria: General Reiterates Sofia's Commitment to CFE

AU1403150596 Sofia BTA in English 1430 GMT 14 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sofia, March 14 (BTA) — Bulgaria strictly observes its obligations on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), head of Arms Control Department with the Bulgarian Army Colonel-General Lyubomir Gechev said. Today [14 March] expires the period of 120 days in which inspections for compliance with the Treaty were to be conducted. During this period the 12 signatory states made 20 inspections in Bulgaria. Bulgarian experts took part in 33 inspections of sites in 13 states, General Gechev said. No violations on the treaty have been reported in any of the inspected countries and all protocols were signed with no remarks.

CFE was signed on November 19, 1990 by 22 states, Bulgaria included. The treaty imposes quantity restrictions for five main categories of conventional arms and equipment: combat tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery systems of over 100 mm calibre, combat aircraft and attack helicopters. Under the treaty each country was supposed to bring its armed force in line with the specified quantity quotas within a period of 40 months. This period expired on November 17, 1995. On that date Bulgaria announced that it has satisfied the CFE requirements. In compliance with the treaty Bulgaria destroyed 794 tanks, 332 armoured combat vehicles, 410 artillery systems and 100 war planes, General Gechev recalled for BTA.

Bulgaria: IMF Representative Confers With Videnov, Konakchiev

AU1303191396 Sofia BTA in English 1844 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sofia, March 13 (BTA) — Deputy Executive Director for Bulgaria of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Oleg Havrilishin was received today [13 March] by Prime Minister Zhan Videnov, the cabinet's Press Office said. The two officials discussed the key tasks facing the Bulgarian economy in 1996 and 1997, of the structural reform, mass privatization and the stability of the financial sector and the national currency.

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